



The official monthly publication of the Alabama Department of Public Safety

THE BLUE LIGHT



THE HONORABLE BOB RILEY
Governor

COLONEL J. CHRISTOPHER MURPHY
Director

LT. COLONEL F.A. BINGHAM
Assistant Director

MAJOR JERRY CONNER
ABI Division

MAJOR JAMES LYONS
Administrative Division

MAJOR HUGH McCALL
Driver License Division

MAJOR ROSCOE HOWELL
Highway Patrol Division

MAJOR HERMAN WRIGHT
Protective Services Division

MAJOR CHARLES ANDREWS
Service Division



FEBRUARY 2009 INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

<i>The Colonel's Corner</i>	2
<i>Troopers' Thoughts on the Inauguration</i>	4
<i>Riley Highlights Success Reducing Fatalities</i>	7
<i>ABI Welcomes Direct-Hire Investigators</i>	9
<i>Budget Cuts Weakened by Reserves</i>	10
<i>Lieutenant Leadership Training</i>	11
<i>Retirees Reminisce</i>	13
<i>People You Know!</i>	15

The Colonel's Corner



Lt. Col. F.A. "Bubba" Bingham, Assistant Director

"In the long history of the world, only a few generations have been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility — I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavor will light our country and all who serve it. And the glow from that fire can truly light the world."

These words from President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address have come full circle since that cold winter day of Jan. 20, 1961. Not since that inauguration have the Alabama State Troopers had the privilege to participate in the security of an inaugural event. I'm told that about 20 troopers traveled to Washington, D.C., to participate in the security for

Kennedy's inauguration.

In May 2008, Col. Chris Murphy received a letter from Cathy Lanier, chief of the Washington, D. C., Metropolitan Police Department, asking for volunteers to assist with the security of the inaugural parade route or inaugural ball sites for the 56th Presidential Inaugural event. The fact that the Alabama Department of Public Safety was asked to participate is a testament to its professionalism and an indicator that the new direction and professional standards in place have earned DPS a national reputation as an elite organization.

Because of the historic significance of this particular inaugural event, Chief Lanier disseminated her request nationwide, requesting several thousand additional officers from across the country to assist with security. Having participated in numerous inaugural events himself as a Secret Service agent, Col. Murphy passed the letter to me for *consideration*. I didn't have to *consider* it for very long. I immediately reached out to some eager assistants, and months of meticulous planning began. Lts. Deena Pregno and Tim Pullin were asked to coordinate most of the issues of this event.

At the top of the list of concerns was, "Who would go?" Each division chief was asked to submit a list of his interested subordinates. I wasn't surprised to find that the returning lists contained a lengthy array of names of those eager to participate in this historic event ... but I could only take 50.

While researching our mission, I discovered quite a daunting list of tasks. Our troopers would be expected to perform one or more of the following missions: maintaining order, preserving public safety and protection of property, ensuring the safety of residents and tourists, maintaining perimeter security, effectively managing pedestrian and vehicular traffic, or safely escorting dignitaries into and out of venues associated with the events,

The Colonel's Corner (CONTINUED)

for up to 20 hours.

Issues such as transportation, lodging, meals, cold weather gear, weather (very cold, rain, ice, snow or all of it) and many other concerns were discussed and planned through a series of inner-office meetings and conference calls. Although the Metro PD had stated that meals, lodging, transportation, per diem and all costs associated with the inaugural event would be reimbursed, we had to closely coordinate those costs with the Metro PD planners.

Through the untiring efforts of Lts. Pregno and Pullin, essential items of winter clothing were acquired: ear muffs, coats, gloves, safety vests, etc. Every item of dress was considered, right down to the tie pin. My goal was to insure that our troopers were provided the necessary items of clothing to stay warm, display a professional appearance and look exact, to the best of my ability.

2:00 A.M., Jan. 20, 2009.

Colonel;

By the time you read this, 50 of your finest troopers will be along a parade route assisting with the security of the President of the greatest country on earth. We're all very proud to be counted among the 4000 additional officers from all over the country to participate in this most historical event. Our only goal is to make you and the citizens of Alabama and the nation proud. We shall not fail. On behalf of the professional men and women on this detail, thank you for this momentous opportunity.

Lt. Col. F. A. Bingham

I'm proud to acknowledge that each and every trooper, from every division, to include Capitol Police, complied with each directive with unquestioned precision and professionalism. Inauguration day began at 3 a.m. in the hotel lobby. Everyone was standing tall and ready to go to work, whatever the assignment. Leaders inspected their squads.

During the day I purposely walked up and down our cordon, checking the welfare of the officers. Although it was bitterly cold, windy and uncomfortable, no one uttered a harsh word or a single complaint. One officer actually had ice in his socks, but never complained. He simply warmed up and took his post again on the line. This is true display of dedication and commitment to completing a task. When asked if they'd volunteer for this assignment again, I was told that, in spite of the bitter cold, they'd do it again if given the chance. These fine men and women worked for 17 hours in a 17-degree wind chill, ending the work day in the hotel lobby at 8 p.m.

Jan. 20, 2009, the Alabama Department of Public Safety *was* a part of history. Fifty troopers were "granted the role of defending freedom" and "did not shrink from the responsibility" – *We* welcomed it. *I* do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. These men and women stood their post. They were the first ones there and the last ones to leave. They represented the department and the citizens of Alabama professionally and with an unwavering dedication and devotion to mission accomplishment. I think I can speak for everyone who went: We're proud to have had the opportunity and to have been a part of this team in Washington, D.C. ■



A Proud Moment...

DPS Reflects on the Inauguration of President Barack Obama.

In what proved to be a proud day for the department, the state of Alabama, and the United States of America as a whole, the Department of Public Safety sent 50 troopers to Washington, D.C., to assist in providing security for the 56th Inauguration of the President of the United States Jan. 20.

“It was cold and windy,” Capt. Charles Ward quipped, when asked of his thoughts of the event. “Honestly, though, my entire viewpoint will forever be altered. I now have a whole new appreciation for what goes on in America. It was amazing to see, first-hand, the Secret Service work, and I was equally impressed with how well the Washington Metro Police Department was set up to handle the event.”

Lt. Thomas Bates added, “It truly was an honor and a privilege to attend such an historic event. The opportunity to participate in such a prestigious occasion is a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence that I will never forget. That day was a true blessing for the department, and to know that I was standing there in the cold on the same day that history books will soon write about and record for future generations will be something that I will always hold dear.”

Sgt. Debra Cheatum said, “You know, the magnitude of the event didn’t even hit me until it was unfolding around me. My own mother was excited when I told her that I would be in Washington for the inauguration, but I really didn’t have a desire to go. The only thing I



could think about was the cold.

“However, something happened once I was there,” Cheatum said. “The Monday before the inauguration was Martin Luther King Day, and there was a special on television showing images of Alabama state troopers standing at the Edmund Pettus Bridge, and I thought of how far we’ve come, from that day to the inauguration of Barack Obama, and I immediately was overwhelmed with the importance of the event that was happening all around me.”

Cpl. Melissa Hubbard said, “Not only am I proud of this opportunity to represent Alabama, I am proud of how well our department collaborated so effectively with other states and agencies. It really amazes me how well 93 different agencies can come together to work as one unit. Through this, we were able to build strong bonds and share ideas with several other departments. It truly was an honor to participate in this event, and is something I will always remember.”

Cpl. Jackie Hornsby also felt honored to have been in Washington for the inauguration. “This is an event that has only happened for the department once before, for the inauguration of President Kennedy. It was an honor for our department to be invited, and it was an honor for me to attend. Everything went smoothly, and the only real surprise for me



was expecting even more people to be there than there were.”

Offering insight into the event’s magnitude, Ward said, “This was a great event to be a part of, if for nothing else, than to just say, ‘I was there.’ By most accounts, 2 million or so people actually hold rights to that claim, yet 10 years from now, you may have as many as 40 million staking that claim.

“Still, with all of the people in Washington that day, one of the most amazing things to me was the overall obedient attitude I was given by the crowd. With that many people, I was expecting some big problems, yet no one gave us any, and the crowd was both cooperative and appreciative of our assistance. In fact, I didn’t see anyone give any officer there any problems whatsoever. I was pleasantly surprised by that fact.”

Bates said of his experience, “There are two things that I gathered from the inauguration. The first is the level of the camaraderie we all shared. This event established a bond among our group that boosted our rapport with one another to levels I haven’t seen in years, if ever. The second moment that I will always remember will be seeing the president and his daughter waving their arms to the crowd. His daughter was flailing her arms in such a manner that you could literally feel her own excitement. That memory will be with me always.”



“Seeing the Capitol at 3 a.m. the day of the inauguration was a sight to behold,” said

Cheatum. “The building was lighted and draped in flags. The scene was peaceful and serene. Television cannot do justice to the feeling of actually being there. The atmosphere is totally different. I think we were all wrapped up in the excitement of the moment. Actually seeing President Obama after being sworn into office, with my own eyes, is something I will never forget, and something I’m sure I wouldn’t feel, had I only witnessed it on a television screen.”



“As for the importance for the department,” Ward concluded, “this was something that definitely put us — the department and the state as a whole — in a good light. There were many agencies represented there, and I feel we were some of the best-dressed and best-looking troopers there. Plus, it isn’t just how we looked, it was how our actions spoke for us. Of course, we acted with professionalism, but we were quoted and noticed by Washington, D.C., Metro Police. They were impressed by how well we work together and how well we all get along with one another. I feel that speaks volumes as to what kind of a department we have, and that is definitely something that we should all be proud of.” ■





Riley Highlights Success in '08 in Reduction of Highway Fatality Rate

In a press conference at DPS Headquarters, Gov. Bob Riley celebrated the news that 2008 was the safest year on Alabama's highways in 23 years. Joining Riley and singled out for their agencies' work to increase safety were Joe McInnes, director of the Alabama Department of Transportation; Bill Johnson, director of the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs; and Col. J. Christopher Murphy, director of Public Safety.

Preliminary numbers for 2008 show 633 people lost their lives in crashes on Alabama's rural highways. The last time year-end statistics were this low was 1985, when 618 fatalities were worked by Alabama state troopers. The figure for 2008 represents a 17 percent reduction from the previous year and a reduction of nearly 24 percent from 2006.

"When it comes to saving lives, Alabama is moving in the right direction," Riley said. "What's especially im-



portant to realize is this: our 17 percent drop in highway deaths is well above the 10 percent drop recorded nationally. That means while a decrease in highway travel has played a role, it isn't the only reason why deaths are down in Alabama."

The governor praised the cooperative efforts of ALDOT, ADECA and DPS in making Alabama a safer place to live and work.

The governor was quick to point out the success of the "Take Back Our Highways" enforcement campaigns

and the deployment of 14 BAT mobiles in contributing to the decrease of fatalities on Alabama's highways.

Last year saw the introduction of "Take Back Our Highways: 50/4," in which 50 additional troopers focused their efforts in four-day blitzes on key areas notorious for high-fatality counts. Another first implemented during the campaign was 24-hour intensive details.

The BAT-mobiles are a key component of Task Force Zero, a state trooper initiative to combat impaired driving. The task force focuses on detecting, testing and processing impaired drivers through increased patrols and DUI checkpoints across the state.



The BAT-mobiles are equipped with custom alcohol testing gear provided by the Department of Forensic Sciences and other equipment needed to process impaired drivers and gather evidence for court. Video cameras inside the BAT-mobiles record footage that can be used as evidence in court, as a training tool for officers and as a way to ensure that officers perform their job duties correctly. The BAT-mobiles are funded by a \$1.4 million grant awarded by Riley and administered through ADECA. ■

The Littlest Trooper



Tpr. Will Keenan's son, Hunter, will make a fine trooper one day, but for now his remarkably detailed costume will have to do.



ATTENTION TROOPERS

Own a piece of history before it is too late!
Special commemorative badges
are available for purchase. Act now, before
the die is destroyed forever.

Contact Reserve Tpr. Charlie Bryant
for further details at (256) 318-3220.



The Department of Public Safety welcomed its first five special agents in ABI's direct-hire investigator program following their graduation Feb. 2 from the program's orientation program. The five sworn officers in this pilot program bring the department many years of experience in handling major criminal investigations and will augment ABI's abilities to investigate and to train other investigators, according to ABI Division Chief Maj. Jerry Conner.

The program, informally discussed for many years, began to gather momentum last January when Col. J. Christopher Murphy proposed the idea as a way to supplement manpower in ABI's caseload.

"We are trying to do things just a little differently," Conner said. "Some may not appreciate the change at first, but once you understand that these special agents were hand-picked for their technical and specialized skills, you'll start to wonder why this wasn't done sooner."

Of the special agents, one is highly regarded as an expert in handling cybercrimes against children. Another was selected, in part, due to his experience in working high-level drug cases in New York.

"Along with their level of expertise, one of the greatest advantages of these special agents," said Conner, "is that they are not state troopers. What I mean by that is that they will never transfer or promote out of ABI. They bring experience to our division, but more importantly, they allow us to retain our knowledge base, while also increasing our ability to serve the public."

While these special agents lack a trooper classification, Conner stressed that the process in hiring these investigators was no less rigorous.

Each candidate was interviewed by a panel of five staff members and gauged on his or her suitability to working in the department, based on responses provided. Every special agent was required to pass the same psychological evaluation and extensive background check used in hiring state troopers.

"Our direct-hires may not be troopers, but that doesn't mean we don't hold them to the same standard," Conner said. "Of the 57 applicants considered, 26 were chosen to interview. Those we hired are all highly qualified and will bring a lot to both ABI and the department as a whole."

"Our expectations are high, and the bar has been set. The agents in this pilot program will be closely monitored, and the future of the program rests firmly in these agents' hands," said Conner. ■

Copeland: Reserves Will Weaken '09 Budget Cuts

Copeland and Jack McDaniel peer into their crystal ball. Their forecast? Lean, but not dire.



The current economic downturn is causing belts to tighten statewide. Due to reduced revenue, Gov. Bob Riley ordered a 10 percent reduction to state budgets in December. Riley also implemented freezes on hiring and merit raises.

“People are concerned,” said Chief Financial Officer Fran Copeland. “The current economic situation has state revenues coming in at a lower rate than was appropriated in the budget last year. However, barring something unforeseen at the current time, DPS can weather the storm with relatively few adjustments.”

When initial reports began to surface late in 2007 about skyrocketing gas prices, Copeland took heed and vigilantly began looking for ways to save money to help make up for insufficient fleet operations budgeting. Then, with grim forecasts for 2009 appearing and with the ability to carry unspent cash forward to FY 2009, Copeland further clamped down on spending.

These proactive measures resulted in a tidy sum of rollover money to lessen the blow of the 10 percent mandated budget cut.

“We have already greatly minimized the impact of the budget cuts simply by the amount we saved last year that carried over to this fiscal year,” Copeland said. “The merit raise freeze and a one-month abatement of the employer share of health insurance also aid greatly in reducing costs without making cuts to operations.”

Finally, recent falling gas prices have allowed savings from the fleet operations budget.

“As long as gas prices remain relatively low and there are no further budget cuts, DPS should be OK,” Copeland said.

“Our employees are our most important asset,” Copeland stated. “We are operating on a very lean budget, and I am sure we will all feel the pinch a bit. However, we are much better prepared to absorb these cuts than we normally would be, so the pinch shouldn’t sting too badly.” ■



Lieutenant Leadership Training Helps Move DPS from 'Good to Great'

Barnes discusses challenges facing EOD at the Lieutenant Leadership Training in Selma.

Two sessions of the DPS Lieutenant Management/Leadership Training were held in January. The three-day course, consisting of 20 hours of instruction, was taught at the Alabama Criminal Justice Training Center in Selma.

The goal of the seminar is to provide an overview of the goals, responsibilities, and challenges of each division of the department.

“We want to take the idea of leadership to the next level,” said assistant director Lt. Col. F.A. Bingham. “We want to stimulate thought and open discussion between this next generation of leaders. We discussed past practices — the failures and successes. We also provided many examples of how the current leadership has re-tooled the department by granting authority, placing responsibility and requiring accountability.”

“The three-day seminar can be broken down into three parts,” said Lt. Clay Barnes. “The first part focuses on ethics and the various challenges leaders face and the strategies leaders use to meet those challenges. The second and largest component is the overview of challenges facing each division, and the seminar wraps up with a session on stress management.”

Barnes, himself offering instruction at the seminar on ABI’s EOD Unit, found the three-day training both informative and insightful.

“We have and will continue to look for ways to move the department forward,” Bingham said. “We seek out unique skill sets and provide opportunities for individuals to excel. What we do is not about individuals or individual units, areas or divisions. Everything we do is focused with one purpose





Lt. Bill Eller talks about how the newly opened Fusion Center aids in terrorist prevention.

in mind, and that is to move the department from good to great as one unit.”

“There is some really great stuff we’re learning here,” said Barnes. “Even though we do many things, it’s important to remember we are one department and all share a common goal. Each division faces its own challenges, and we are discussing those challenges faced in ’08, and looking forward to the challenges we will face in ’09.”

“In this era of severely limited financial resources, every purchase, action, task or mission has to benefit the department as a whole,” said Bingham. “We strive daily to advance our department goals of efficient use of technology, efficient use of human resources, improving customer service and satisfaction, safer roadways and leadership development. Our hard work is paying big dividends. The Department of Public Safety not only has the support of the Legislature and the governor, it also has the support of the citizens of Alabama. We plan to raise up leaders that will carry our vision well into the future.” ■

NATIONAL INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CLASS



This is the first class to receive in-service credit for NIMS training. Instructing the class was Lt. Joe McClellan. This training is mandated by the Department of Homeland Security. All troopers are required to have NIMS training commensurate with their rank. Currently, all sergeants, lieutenants, and captains are required to take NIMS Incident Command System 300 training before April 1, 2009. ICS-300 classes are scheduled for Feb. 18-19, March 9-10, and March 16-17. Report time for the first day is 9 a.m.



Catching Up over Lunch:

DPS RETIREES REMINISCE

Fond memories and war stories could be heard all around Jim's Restaurant in Prattville Jan. 21, as DPS retirees in the tri-county area met to reminisce, while sharing a bite to eat.

Retired Capt. Roy Smith warmly greeted all of the retirees as they arrived, while retired Capt. Robert Applin set up a video camera to assist Tommy Giles in documenting the event.

Fellow retirees who had the opportunity to fly with either retired Chief Pilot Jerry Hatfield or retired Pilot Jim Mays were quick to brag of their acrobatics in maneuvering the aircraft and even quicker to boast of how sick they felt after flying.

Retired Tpr. Herbie Johnson and retired Capt. Chuck Franklin talked of their first days in Highway Patrol, while retired Maj. Ken Hallford talked about his many years in ABI.

Retired Col. Harold Hammond spoke, not of the past, but of another upcoming Honor Flight in which he is participating.

And amongst all the chatter overheard in Jim's that day, all eyes were on "Charlie," as he was known by virtually everyone there.



The 6-foot, 6-inch Charlie Baltzell joined the Alabama Highway Patrol in January 1939, under founding Gov. Bibb Graves. Tall and handsome, Baltzell, now in his 90s, is believed to be the oldest living member of the department.

“I probably haven’t seen you in 30 years,” said Franklin to Baltzell. “There are a few more wrinkles, but aside from that, you haven’t changed. You look virtually the same now as you did then.”

Baltzell, both well-respected by his peers, and by most accounts, well-admired by many women, was definitely the talk of the restaurant.



When asked of his fondest memories of the department, Baltzell smiled and answered coolly, “Now I can’t tell you about that, but many of my most memorable moments stem from the civil rights struggles in the ’60s.”

After lunch, all of the retirees stepped outside for a group photograph.



Most of the crowd remained in the parking lot at Jim’s, reluctant to leave from this happy meeting. Baltzell, the first to go, due to a scheduled doctor’s appointment, happily strolled to his Chevy Blazer and drove off.

As he was leaving, from the crowd rose a voice. “Does Charlie still deer hunt? If not, what is he doing with that hitch-mounted deer carrier on the back of his SUV?”

The roar of laughter from the convening of old friends continued well into the afternoon. ■

People You Know!



New Employees

James Earnhardt	1.05.09	Capitol Police Officer	PS/Capitol Police
Michael Lingo	1.01.09	Capitol Police Officer	PS/Capitol Police
Steve McQuiston	12.16.08	Custodial Worker	HP/Opelika

Transfers

Rachel Fields	12.16.08	ASA III	ADM/Inspections Unit
Zachary Harrelson	1.09.09	Trooper	HP/Lowndes County
John Lewis	12.16.08	Trooper	HP/Calhoun County
Mary McMichael	12.16.08	ASA III	ADM/Personnel Unit
Gregory Ward	12.16.08	Trooper	DL/Etowah County
Rhonda Williams	12.16.08	ASA I	ADM/Lt. Colonel's Office

Resignations

Theodore Chastain	12.31.08	IT Systems Technician	DL/Information Services
Laura Page	1.05.09	PCO I	HP/Mobile
Matthew Sponsler	12.31.08	IT Systems Technician	DL/Information Services

Retirements

Edward Odom	12.31.08	Captain	DL/Mobile
Robert Phillips	12.31.08	Sergeant	HP/Huntsville
Catherine Smith	12.31.08	DL Examiner I	DL/Decatur

Alabama Department of



Public Safety

CONTRIBUTING:

Maj. Hugh McCall, DL

Capt. Charles Ward, PS

Lt. Clay Barnes, ABI

Lt. Jack Clark, HP

Tpr. John Reese, ADM

Tommy Giles, Photography

EDITOR:

Ryan Godfrey

RSA Criminal Justice Center Montgomery, Ala.



WE'RE ON THE WEB!

DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

Questions? Comments? Concerns?

STAY IN TOUCH WITH *THE BLUE LIGHT*.

PLEASE E-MAIL ALL REQUESTS TO:

RYAN.GODFREY@DPS.ALABAMA.GOV

On Your Calendar

Monday, February 16

President's Day

Tuesday, February 24

Mardi Gras

Monday, April 27

Confederate Memorial Day

Monday, May 25

National Memorial Day

ACJTC TRAINING SCHEDULE FEBRUARY '09

Date	Event
Feb. 2-6	Basic Police Session 134
2-6	Trooper Class 2009-A
9-13	Basic Police 134
9-13	Trooper Class 2009-A
10-11	DL 1st Line Supervisor Course
12	Bridge Crossing
17-20	Basic Police 134
17-20	Trooper Class 2009-A
18-19	NIMS Training
18-19	TAC Team Training
23-27	Basic Police Session 134
23-27	Trooper Class 2009-A
23-27	Basic Examiner Course